

# City News

The Newsletter of the  
City of Veneta

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## City Considers Policing District

A fast moving proposal to form a Fern Ridge Community Policing District is an inspiring example of how citizen government should work. And if the concept makes it on the May 17, 2016 ballot and garners citizen support, the establishment of the District would likely eliminate the need for Veneta to have a separate contract with the Lane County Sheriff's Office. More importantly, the Fern Ridge area would see 24-hour deputy coverage for Veneta and surrounding areas, including Crow, Noti, Walton, Elmira, and Alvadore. Both Crow and Elmira High Schools would receive Deputy coverage. Designated beds in the Lane County Jail

would ensure that those arrested could be detained. A full-time District Attorney would then consider prosecution. A Fern Ridge Youth Corps would intervene with at-risk youth in an effort to deter them from crime. And the entire concept grew out of citizen concern and, more important, citizen action.

"At town hall meetings in the fall of 2014, a group of concerned citizens came to discuss our law enforcement issues," said City Administrator Ric Ingham. The City of Veneta and its deputies supported the growth of neighborhood watch initiatives and increased Sgt. Billy C. Halvorson's contract, providing more community policing oversight.

Meanwhile, a group of individuals formed the Veneta Crime Watch Group and worked hard behind the scenes to craft the idea for a new law enforcement special district.

"The group, led by Steve and Karen Reister, identified the needs, engaged the right people, and educated themselves about where the crisis points were in Lane County's public safety system," said Ingham. And at an October 12 City Council Work Session, Reister presented a proposal for a new policing district that would serve the Fern Ridge area. The proposal gained the support of both the Veneta City Council and the Lane County

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## Holiday Season In Full Swing

Join your friends and neighbors for the City of Veneta's traditional Tree Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 3 at 6:30 p.m. This annual holiday kickoff takes place at the West Lane Shopping Center in front of Ixtapa and will include performances by local school choirs and a visit from Santa.

Then on Dec. 10 at 7:00 p.m., line the streets for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Fern Ridge Light Parade, when dozens of brightly lit parade floats will make their way through town. "Our first year, the parade was small with only a handful of floats, said City Administrator, Ric Ingham. "We have watched it grow to more than 40. The parade is a wonderful way for families and the community to celebrate the holiday season."

If your organization wishes to be part of this brilliant holiday tradition, it's not too late! Registration forms are still available from the City of Veneta or the Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce office, as well as the Chamber's website.

### CITY OF VENETA - CIVIC CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2015

Veneta Administrative Center - 88184 8th Street, Veneta, Oregon

1	Veneta Planning Commission Meeting - City Hall	6:30 p.m.
2	Veneta Economic Development Committee Meeting - City Hall	2:00 p.m.
2	Veneta Park Board Meeting - City Hall	4:30 p.m.
3	Tree Lighting - West Lane Shopping Center Fountain	Santa at 6:00 p.m. Tree Lighting at 6:30 p.m.
8	Fern Ridge Community Policing District Town Hall Meeting - City Hall	6:30 p.m.
10	Light Parade (See reverse for parade route)	7:00 p.m.
14	Veneta City Council Work Session - City Hall	5:30 p.m.
	Veneta City Council Meeting - City Hall	6:30 p.m.
	Veneta Urban Renewal Agency Meeting - Immediately following City Council Meeting	
17	Municipal Court - City Hall	8:30 a.m.
24	City Hall closed in Observance of Christmas Holiday	Closed
25	Christmas Day - City Hall closed	Closed
28	Veneta City Council Meeting - City Hall	6:30 p.m.



Calendar updates will be posted on the City's website at [www.venetaoregon.gov](http://www.venetaoregon.gov)  
This Civic Calendar was sent to: Fern Ridge Review, Fern Ridge School District 28J, Fern Ridge Public Library, and Lane Fire Authority

## ***Prepared for a Storm?***

Though fall weather was late coming this year, the rain and wind set in with a vengeance in mid-November. Considering the disruption that severe weather can cause, City of Veneta officials urge residents to be prepared for power outages and other consequences of flooding and downed trees by having emergency supplies, such as canned food, bottled water, flashlights, and sleeping bags, on hand and organized.

In the event of a prolonged emergency, basic services, such as gas, water, sewage treatment, and phone service could be cut off for days or even longer and, though local officials and relief workers will do their best, they cannot reach everyone immediately.

Consequently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides a 72-hour emergency kit checklist online at <http://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>. FEMA recommends that each family or individual's kit be customized to meet specific needs, such as medications and infant formula. It should also be customized to include important family documents and be easy to find.

A comprehensive guide to citizen disaster preparedness can be found at <http://www.ready.gov/are-you-ready-guide> "Over the past few years, we've had a lot of people without power for a day or two," said City Administrator Ric Ingham. "This is a good time to prepare for the winter storm season, before it begins."

## ***Economic Development Committee Open for Business***

The City of Veneta's Economic Development Committee is up and running, having met twice in November. An outgrowth of the "Veneta Economic Development Strategy: Five-Year Action Plan, 2015-2019," the Committee's mission is to support local businesses and attract new ones by discovering and, when possible, clearing impediments to their success. The ultimate objective is to help existing businesses expand and attract new employers to create more local jobs. And with RARE (Resource Assistance for Rural Environment) Intern Claudia Denton serving as the committee's conduit to businesses, the group is turning policy and strategic plans into action.

"We are already compiling a database of local businesses and planning an Open House so that we can hear from business operators about what we can do to help them succeed," said Denton. That event takes place January 14 at 6:00 p.m. at the Fern Ridge Public Library.

Committee members will also visit businesses to discuss their needs, with a focus on business retention and expansion (BRE) as well as communication. "We want to understand and improve the business environ-

ment in Veneta," Denton said. "We are also working with the Rural Development Initiative Inc. on a business outreach program to make that happen."

City Administrator Ric Ingham added that two-way communication will help the City to learn which businesses are growing and which may be stale, and how the City, with its county and state partners, may be able to help spur growth.

The Committee also aims to recruit new businesses by marketing surplus industrial and commercial land that is ready for development. Denton will promote these opportunities through appropriate websites to appeal to startup businesses and those looking to relocate.

"Veneta can be very attractive for new business given our infrastructure build-out, anticipated growth rate, and demographics," said Ingham. "It's an appealing community that is open for business. The Committee aims to get that message out."

Denton encourages local businesspeople to participate in the Open House and communicate with her at City Hall. "We want to help," she said. "But we can only do that if we hear from you!"

## ***Policing District continued...***

Board of Commissioners (BOC), and its proponents are requesting the BOC refer the measure to the May ballot.

"The County and City are very interested because this could help address both public safety and budget issues," Ingham continued. "For the Board to place this on the ballot, they need a resolution from the City of Veneta to join the proposed Policing District." That issue will be open for public discussion at a Town Hall meeting at City Hall on December 8 at 6:30 p.m. Another public hearing will occur during the regular City

Council meeting on Monday Dec. 14. "We hope to have a resolution adopted by the end of December so we can forward it to the Board of Commissioners."

If the proposal is successful, it could serve as a model to be replicated throughout Lane County and beyond. Already, Junction City, Creswell, and Florence are watching this issue closely, seeing it as a potential solution to their public safety challenges.

Ingham encourages participation in the upcoming meetings, to learn more and be heard, and to keep this citizen initiative moving forward.